



NEWS RELEASE

NEBRASKA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (NEMA) – 2433 NW 24th STREET – LINCOLN, NE 68524-1801

Joint Information Center (JIC)

Daily Update

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Waters Rising Near North Platte, Slowly Receding Near Big Springs

Caution Still Urged Along South Platte River

LINCOLN, Neb. –Local officials at Big Springs are working with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality to assess whether it is safe to open two truck stops closed due to flooding along the South Platte River as waters begin to recede.

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Assistant Director Al Berndt, encouraged anyone who needed to be near the South Platte River to be careful around floodwater.

“Debris in the water could still cause blockage that might lead to additional flooding and rising water,” Berndt said. “We do have some concerns with the South Platte River running so high that it could back up into the North Platte River, and cause some flooding in low-lying areas near Highway 83.”

Field reports show that water began rising at the Hershey Bridge at 4:45 a.m. today. The depth was estimated at 5 feet as of 8:15 a.m. CDT and according to the National Weather Service, had risen to 12.2 feet as of 10 a.m. MDT. At Brady, the water is expected to crest above flood stage at noon on Saturday.

Once floodwater begins to recede, there will still be public health and safety concerns from contaminants that might still be in the floodwater. This includes standing water that remains. Check the UNL Extension and Department of Health and Human Services section below for links to important information.

The sections below, and others, will be included in the daily release sent by NEMA for the duration of this event.

NEMA

A NEMA field team of six, positioned at Ogallala to assist local emergency managers and local officials with flood monitoring, preparation and response, relocated to North Platte as the waters began raising further east. NEMA’s field team is working from the NEMA Mobile Operations Center, collocated with the Nebraska Department of Roads Incident Management Team Trailer and Nebraska State Patrol Mobile Operations Center.

The State Emergency Operations Center continues to operate at NEMA’s headquarters in Lincoln. NEMA staff is assisting the public and officials along the South Platte River respond to the flooding, and providing information to the NEMA field team. Also working closely with NEMA staff are several state agencies including, Nebraska National Guard, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health & Human

Services, Department of Environmental Quality, State Fire Marshal, Nebraska State Patrol and Nebraska Department of Roads, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission.

University of Nebraska Extension

The University of Nebraska Extension assembled a variety of written and video resources in response to Missouri River flooding in 2001 that can be found at <http://flood.unl.edu>. The resources provide research based information and education to the citizens of Nebraska. The material addresses issues related to homes, water wells, septic systems, farms, home landscapes and family financial and emotional stress.

Nebraska State Patrol:

The Nebraska State Patrol reminds motorists that the floodwater has displaced wildlife along the river. Motorists should pay extra attention when traveling in the affected areas as wildlife, especially deer, could be seeking high ground and crossing roadways.

The Patrol also wants to remind motorists to be on the lookout for road closures and large equipment on roadways due to flood related work.

National Weather Service:

For current information on river gauges and levels use this web link:

<http://water.weather.gov/ahps/region.php?state=ne>

National Guard

Four Nebraska National Guardsmen in two Humvees have responded to the South Platte River area to support local emergency operations. National Guard Soldiers are working with the NEMA field team collecting information in the flooded area.

Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR): <http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov/511/9-2013-flood/info.pdf>

Road Closures:

NDOR closed Road L25B into Big Springs late Wednesday afternoon and it remains closed today. While the I-80 link to Big Springs is closed, people can still exit off of I-80 heading south.

NEW: The L51A link from I-80 to Brule is currently open, but NDOR is monitoring a surge in flow, and the link may have to be closed again depending on the surge.

NEW: The L51B link from I-80 north to Roscoe has closed.

NEW: The L56C Link from I-80 north to Hershey is currently open, but water is rising, and NDOR anticipates it will be closed later this evening.

I-80 statewide is OPEN.

Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality urges people to avoid contact with floodwaters. The public is cautioned about contact with water in the river, standing pools or backwaters which could be contaminated.

Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) has activated its flood webpage at:

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/flooding.aspx>

Private water well owners in soon-to-be-flooded areas should take precautions to prevent their drinking water from being contaminated. Well owners should take the following steps if they believe their well will be impacted:

- Before taking the well out of service, store a supply of clean water
- Disconnect the power supply for the well. Consult a Nebraska-licensed well driller or pump installer if help is needed
- Perform actions necessary to make the well water-tight, including removing the well vent and replacing it with a water-tight plug, and sealing any visible joint openings with water-tight caulking or equivalent material

Tetanus Shots for People in Flooded areas

Tetanus immunization is recommended for all adults every 10 years. Exposure to floodwaters doesn't increase the risk of tetanus according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, if you get a severe wound or deep cut, check with your health care provider to see if you need a booster. Tetanus is an infectious disease, but it's not spread from one person to another. The bacteria that cause tetanus are found in the soil and usually enter the body through a wound. The infection is very serious and will involve a long hospital stay. Surviving tetanus disease doesn't create immunity. The only way to guarantee future protection is through immunization.

State Fire Marshal

State Fire Marshal staff is in the field monitoring the effects of rising water on propane storage and other fire hazards.

American Red Cross

As the water from Colorado flows into Nebraska, more than a dozen American Red Cross disaster action workers from North Platte, Kearney, Grand Island, Lincoln and Omaha continue to prepare for potential flooding in communities along the South Platte River.

Red Cross workers have met with Southern Baptist and UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) and are working closely with the Salvation Army Partners. In addition, the Red Cross is positioned to open shelters in nine communities along the South Platte River, should homeowners be forced out of their homes. Shelters will provide displaced residents with a safe place to stay, a place to sleep, a hot meal, minor first aid, referrals and a shoulder to lean on.

Shelter App: People can locate a shelter by calling 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., or downloading the Red Cross Shelter App.

Anyone evacuating to a Red Cross shelter should bring essential items for each member of the family:

- Prescriptions and emergency medications
- Foods that meet unusual dietary requirements
- Identification to show residence is in affected area and important personal documents
- Extra clothing, pillows, blankets, hygiene supplies and other comfort items
- Supplies needed for children and infants, such as diapers, formula and toys
- Special items for family members who are elderly or disabled

www.redcross.org

Salvation Army

A North Platte Salvation Army emergency disaster services team is ready to help and another team from Kearney is on standby. Disaster services range from distributing food and clothing, to providing counseling and support, and sometimes even providing temporary shelter. <http://www.usc.salvationarmy.org/western>.

Oregon Trail Baptist Association

The Oregon Trail Baptist Association out of North Platte is also available to provide meals as needed.



[List of County Emergency Managers](#)

[List of Nebraska Local Health Departments](#)

For flooding information visit: <http://www.nema.ne.gov/newsroom/flooding-information.shtml>